

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

November 12, 1974

MEMORANDUM FOR: THE PRESIDENT

FROM: ROY L. ASH

SUBJECT: Food Aid Issues Raised by the  
World Food Conference

As expected, the World Food Conference has increased the visibility of the food aid issue in the U.S. and abroad. In Rome, there is movement toward the long sought after U.S. goal of encouraging other developed countries to share in the food aid burden, especially in the next several critical months until a new crop can be harvested.

However, the U.S. decision not to commit now to providing more food aid in the short term will be interpreted by many as a failure "to do everything humanly possible to assure that our future contribution will be responsive to the growing needs." Standing alone, this well publicized decision will leave the U.S. open to mounting criticism as the consequences of increasingly severe food shortages abroad become apparent over the next few months.

To avoid this outcome, the U.S. should act, even while the World Food Conference continues, to provide positive leadership to enhance the desirable momentum toward more burden sharing that is developing in Rome, while at the same time not ending up paying a disproportionate amount of the bill. Particularly, we should try to assure that the short term U.S. and world crop situation does not undermine attempts to develop solid longer term solutions to the world food problem.

To provide this positive leadership now and in the weeks immediately ahead, the U.S. must provide answers to the following questions:

1. Given the U.S. decision not to provide additional food aid at this time, what can the U.S. do now to help maintain the momentum toward other developed countries contributing more food aid in the next several months?



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2. What can be done to make Secretary Kissinger's commitment -- that the U.S. will do "everything humanly possible" to help feed the starving and the hungry -- credible for Americans and other nations?
3. What can the U.S. do to assure Americans and other countries that the pressures created by today's food shortages have not caused us to shrink from accepting a responsible leadership role in helping develop solutions for the longer term world food problem?

RECOMMENDATION

That you ask the International Food Review Group to consider the above issues and, at the earliest possible time, to recommend actions that the U.S. should take at the World Food Conference, and in the weeks immediately following the Conference, to provide positive leadership on the world food issue within the limits of our responsibility and the resources we are willing to make available for such an effort.

APPROVE \_\_\_\_\_

DISAPPROVE \_\_\_\_\_

